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Coalition to keep eye on Kissinger panel

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A coalition of conservative organizations announced formation Friday of a "Citizens Commission on the Crisis in the Americas" that will monitor the recently appointed Kissinger Commission and present its own foreign policy recommendations for Central America.

James R. Whelan, editor and publisher of The Washington Times, has agreed to serve as interim chairman of the commission.

Whelan, a former Latin American

correspondent for UPI, told reporters, "The crisis confronting this nation in Central America is perhaps the gravest in my lifetime. For the first time a powerful and implacable enemy is succeeding in carrying its influence to the very vicinity of our borders."

Howard Phillips, chairman of the Conservative Caucus, announced formation of the commission at the National Press Club. Emphasizing that he was not speaking for the commission, Phillips also called for confirmation hearings and a record vote on President Reagan's appointment of Henry Kis-

singer to head a special presidential commission on Central America.

"Dr. Kissinger has been involved in some of the most serious foreign policy defeats ever suffered by the United States, including the loss of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia to communist totalitarians," Phillips said.

"The Senate can do no less than to call Secretary Kissinger to account for his role in these decisions and President Reagan should do everything possible to cooperate in making such hearings possible," Phillips said, adding, "I don't think foreign policy should be shaped by an unconfirmed group of private citizens."

Citizens who thus far have been appointed to this the new commission include Ray Cline, a fellow at the Georgetown University Center for Strategic and International Studies and former deputy director of the CIA; Sen. Steve Symms, R-Idaho; L. Francis Bouche, president of the Council on Inter-American Security; Earl E. Smith, the last U.S. Ambassador to Cuba; Marion Smoak, former chief of protocol at the State Department; Phillips; Prof. Herminio Portel Villa, head of Radio Free America; and Dr. Joseph Churba, director of the Center for International Security.